

The Role of the Various Elements in the Development and Regeneration of Bone

William Macewen

Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B 1907 **79**, 397-398

doi: 10.1098/rspb.1907.0034

Email alerting service

Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article - sign up in the box at the top right-hand corner of the article or click [here](#)

To subscribe to *Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B* go to:
<http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/subscriptions>

The Rôle of the Various Elements in the Development and Regeneration of Bone.

By Sir WILLIAM MACEWEN, F.R.S.

(Received and Read January 24, 1907.)

(Abstract.)

The present inquiry has been undertaken with the view of obtaining data, chiefly by direct experiment, as to the rôle which the various elements play in the development and reproduction of bone. This communication deals with a part of the subject, under two heads:—A, the potentiality of the periosteum as a factor in the production of bone, and B, the regeneration of bone from proliferation of osseous tissue. The following is a brief *résumé* of the paper:—

A. POTENTIALITY OF PERIOSTEUM AS A FACTOR IN REPRODUCTION OF BONE.

(1) To test this, a complete cylinder, constituting a portion of the shaft of a long bone, was removed while the periosteum was preserved intact. This showed, ten weeks afterwards, an osseous defect, constituting a gap in the continuity of the shaft.

(2) Periosteum free from osseous plaques was removed and transplanted. This was not followed by reproduction of bone, but by absorption of the periosteum.

(3) Duhamel's silver ring experiments are discussed and the correctness of the deductions drawn therefrom are questioned.

In order to test whether the bone cells or the periosteum produces the bone which covers the silver rings, three experiments, each differing from the other, were performed, in which silver rings were placed on bone deprived of its periosteum, with the result that in each case the rings became covered with bone.

B. THE REGENERATION OF BONE, FROM PROLIFERATION OF OSSEOUS TISSUE.

The periosteum is shown to be a limiting membrane controlling the osteoblasts, as illustrated in fractures, when the periosteum is intact and when it is torn. The production of callus is not inherently greater in the lower animals than in man—the amount of callus in both depends on the limitation of the periosteum and the amount of movement. (4) Direct experiment, showing that a long bone deprived of its periosteum continues to grow, (5) so also do the flat bones of the skull. (6) Bone may be made

VOL. LXXIX.—B.

2 G

to grow in the midst of lacerated muscles by the mechanical distribution of osteoblasts. Observation. Riders Bone. Suggestion as to the production of myositis ossificans.

(7) Can shavings of nude bone grow on being placed between muscles in a gap in the continuity of the shaft? Experiment and result seven weeks after show that not only do they grow, but that they also proliferate to a very marked extent.

Is there any direct evidence to show that transplanted living bone actually grows and proliferates instead of forming, like blood clot, a passive framework for the granulation tissue to penetrate, which framework will then become absorbed? There is, as may be illustrated (8) in an instance of bone grown in sponge filled with granulation tissue.

(9) To test the osteogenic power of bone cells constituting the shaft of a long bone, they were grown inside of a glass tube. Result.

(10) Intra-human transplantation of bone. Result 28 years after. Data are obtained from this experiment as to the growth of the humerus from the proximal and distal epiphyseal cartilages respectively. Also as to interstitial osseous increase—evidence of the increase in length of the diaphysis from the epiphyseal cartilage toward which the nutrient vessel runs.
